

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

A method for identifying clusters of fail bits in a bitmap, comprises: (a) finding an available fail bit in a bitmap, and adding the available fail bit to a cluster list; (b) finding a first set of available fail bits individually within a prespecified distance from the available fail bit, and adding the first set of available fail bits to the cluster list; and (c) finding additional sets of available fail bits individually within the prespecified distance from individual of the first set or individual sets of available fail bits, and adding the additional sets of available fail bits to the cluster list so as to identify a cluster of fail bits in the bitmap. An apparatus for identifying clusters of fail bits in a bitmap comprises a memory for storing the bitmap and at least one circuit configured to perform the method.

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